

Salute to Our Troops

By Congressman Jerry Moran

Kansas Day – January 29, 2005

We owe so much to the men and women of our armed forces – those who served in the past and those who serve today. There is much we take for granted, much we enjoy, because of their sacrifice. My words cannot adequately convey the appreciation, pride, and respect that these men and women deserve from their countrymen.

I have the honor of representing the citizens of Junction City – a Kansas community that knows all too well the meaning of military service and the sacrifice of being in a soldier's family.

Children often have a way with truth.

They have an ability to express honest, heart-felt sentiments that we adults sometimes have trouble expressing.

Let me share with you excerpts from letters written by children from the Junction City, Ft. Riley area, about their moms and dads serving in the armed forces.

Emmanuel Cockrell, a fifth grader at Ft. Riley, writes about his dad: "Sometimes I think, 'Why is he in the Army? What can't he have a normal job?' He told me he's proud of serving in the Army. He likes being a soldier; when he wears his BDUs, people know he's in the Army, and it makes him feel really proud inside."

Emmanuel also says, "My dad is my hero.

I look up to him and I want to be like him when I grow up.

I want to be a soldier and serve in the Army.

I will try to make our world a better place to live."

Nicki Buenrostro, a sixth grader in Junction City, writes, "I'm proud my dad is in the U.S. armed forces because he is fighting for our country. He is one of thousands of soldiers who wear the colors of our country. When I think of him, it sometimes makes me sad and glad that he is there to protect us.

He is our family's knight in shining armor."

Deja Davila, a fourth grader at Ft. Riley, writes, "I'm proud of my mom who is a medic, because when soldiers get injured, my mom is there to heal their injuries. My mom is in 125th Charlie Company, and she always does physical training and is never late for formation.

When she goes out to the field, I cry, because I really miss her a lot.

I just want to say that I'm really proud of my mom for being in the military and hope she will stay in the army.

I'm proud to be a military kid!"

These children boast their pride and so too, should we. Their moms and dads serve so that we may gather here tonight beneath this banner of freedom, celebrating the gifts of liberty and democracy. But in this fight for freedom, they are forced to make sacrifices.

And, while we honor those that serve, we should also pay tribute to those that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

I ask every member of the military – active, guard, and reserve, and every veterans and military retiree, to stand and receive our applause, our expression of respect and gratitude.

For those who served in the past, and for those who serve us today, we owe you an unending debt of gratitude. May God bless our Kansas soldiers, their families, and the country they serve.